

**Amendments In the Claims**

Please amend Claims 13, 17, 23 and 27. Please cancel Claim 17. Please add Claim 28.

1. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:  
a network element port circuit comprising  
a first input/output (I/O) port, a second I/O port and a third I/O port;  
an optical connector interface coupled to said third I/O port and  
configured to  
couple an optical network connector to a mounting surface, and  
couple said optical network connector to said first I/O port;  
an electrical connector interface coupled to said third I/O port and  
configured to  
couple an electrical network connector to said mounting surface,  
and  
couple the electrical network connector to said second I/O port,  
wherein  
said optical connector interface and said electrical connector  
interface are vertically aligned with one another with  
respect to said mounting surface.
2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein  
said electrical connector interface comprises a registered jack 45 (RJ-45)  
interface.
3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein  
said optical connector interface comprises an interface of a small form factor  
pluggable (SFP) optical module.
4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein  
said optical connector interface comprises an interface of a gigabit interface  
converter (GBIC) optical module.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising:  
an electrical isolation circuit coupled to said RJ-45 interface.
6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein  
said electrical isolation circuit comprises one or more magnetics components.
7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:  
an auto-media detection physical layer protocol circuit, wherein  
said first, second and third I/O ports are coupled to said auto-media  
detection physical layer protocol circuit.
8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising:  
a visual indicator to indicate which of said optical connector interface and said  
electrical connector interface is active on said network element port  
circuit.
9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein  
said visual indicator comprises at least one of a light emitting diode and a light  
pipe.
10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2,  
wherein said electrical connector interface comprises an upper connector interface  
of said network element port circuit, and  
wherein said optical connector interface comprises a lower connector interface of  
said network element port circuit.
11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising:  
a first electromagnetic signal shield enclosing at least a portion of said optical  
connector interface; and  
a second electromagnetic signal shield enclosing at least a portion of said  
electrical connector interface.
12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein  
said mounting surface comprises a printed circuit board.

13. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus comprising:  
 a network element port circuit comprising  
**an auto-media detection physical layer protocol circuit, and**  
 first, second and third input/output (I/O) ports, wherein  
     said first and second I/O ports are coupled to said third I/O port;  
 an optical connector interface coupled to the network element port circuit at the  
     first I/O port;  
 an electrical connector interface coupled to the network element port circuit at the  
     second I/O port, **wherein** ~~and~~  
~~wherein~~ said optical connector interface and said electrical connector  
     interface are substantially adjacent to one another along a line  
     defined by an intersection of a connector-receiving plane of said  
     network element port circuit and a connector-insertion plane of  
     said network element port circuit.
14. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said electrical  
 connector interface comprises:  
     a registered jack 45 (RJ-45) interface.
15. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said optical connector  
 interface comprises:  
     an interface of a small form factor pluggable (SFP) optical module.
16. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said optical connector  
 interface comprises:  
     an interface of a gigabit interface converter (GBIC) optical module.
17. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim **13** ~~[[14]]~~, further comprising:  
 an electrical isolation circuit coupled to said **electrical connector RJ-45**  
     interface.
18. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 17 wherein said electrical isolation  
 circuit comprises:  
     one or more magnetics components.

19. Canceled.
20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:  
a visual indicator to indicate which of said optical connector interface and said  
electrical connector interface is active on said network element port  
circuit.
21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said a visual indicator  
comprises:  
at least one of a light emitting diode and a light pipe.
22. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 14,  
wherein said electrical connector interface comprises an upper connector interface  
of said network element port circuit, and  
wherein said optical connector interface comprises a lower connector interface of  
said network element port circuit.
23. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 13 ~~[[14]]~~, further comprising:  
a first electromagnetic signal shield enclosing at least a portion of said optical  
connector interface; and  
a second electromagnetic signal shield enclosing at least a portion of said  
electrical connector interface.
24. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:  
coupling an optical connector interface at a first input/output (I/O) port of a  
network element port circuit, wherein  
said optical connector interface is further coupled to a third I/O port of  
said network element port circuit and to a mounting surface;  
coupling an electrical connector interface at a second I/O port of said network  
element port circuit, wherein  
said electrical connector interface is further coupled to the third I/O port of  
said network element port circuit and to said mounting surface  
such that said optical connector interface and said electrical  
connector interface are vertically aligned with one another with  
respect to said mounting surface, and

said electrical connector interface comprises a RJ-45 interface.

25. Canceled
26. (Previously Presented) The network element port circuit of claim 7, wherein said auto-media detection physical layer protocol circuit is configured to  
select a selected port from between said first and second I/O ports,  
process a signal received on said selected port, and  
transmit the processed signal from said third I/O port.
27. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 13 **[[19]]**, wherein said auto-media detection physical layer protocol circuit is configured to  
select a selected port from between said first and second I/O ports,  
process a signal received on said selected port, and  
transmit the processed signal from said third I/O port.
28. **(New)** The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein  
the optical connector interface is configured to be separably coupled to the optical  
network connector, and  
the electrical connector interface is configured to be separably coupled to the  
electrical network connector.